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News Release

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CONDITIONAL SHELLFISH AREAS IN UPPER NARRAGANSETT BAY TO RE- OPEN FOUR AND ONE-HALF DAYS EARLY AS A RESULT OF ACCEPTABLE POST-STORM MONITORING DATA

Conimicut Triangle Will Reopen at Sunrise on Saturday, August 29

PROVIDENCE - The Department of Environmental Management announces that the Conimicut Triangle conditional area in Upper Narragansett Bay will re-open to shellfishing beginning at sunrise on Saturday, August 29 – four and one-half days earlier than the scheduled opening at noon on September 2. The shellfish closure was enacted on Wednesday, August 26 as a result of rainfall recorded at NOAA's TF Green Airport weather station.

The early opening is possible due to the operation of NBC's Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) tunnel and related improvements completed under Phase II, which went online in December 2014. An agreement reached between DEM and the US Food and Drug Administration allows DEM to re-open the Upper Bay conditional areas to shellfish harvesting as soon as post-storm monitoring data demonstrates it is safe to do so. DEM developed this plan to expedite the benefits associated with the tremendous investment in construction of NBC's CSO Abatement Project.

Under this plan, DEM continues to enact a seven-day closure of the shellfish conditional areas in the Upper Bay: Conimicut Triangle after a half-inch (0.5") of rainfall; Area A after eight-tenths of an inch (0.8") of rainfall; and Area B after an inch and a half (1.5") of rainfall. As conditions allow, DEM uses post-storm monitoring data and operational information to determine whether these areas can be opened earlier. The data used to determine acceptability of this early opening – one day after the 0.68" rainfall recorded at T.F. Green Airport during the early hours of Wednesday, August 26 – was collected by DEM staff on August 27th.

At this time, the conditional area of the Greenwich Bay, Mt. Hope Bay and the Kickemuit River are closed and will remain closed until noon on September 2, 2015. DEM maintains a 24-hour shellfishing hotline with recorded updated information on shellfish closure areas. If required, additional closures will be posted on the DEM hotline at 222-2900.